

**Early Kentucky Land Patents: A Power Point Presentation**  
**Supplemental Notes**  
**Office of Kentucky Secretary of State Trey Grayson**

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Welcome to the “Land Patent Workshop” sponsored by the Kentucky Historical Society & the Kentucky Genealogical Society.

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Kentucky’s system of land appropriation was established by King George III of England.

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The King’s Proclamations of 1754 & 1763 are included on the Land Office Website in the Legislation Section of the Reference Library.

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According to the Proclamation of 1763, settlers would reside east of the Proclamation Line. Native Americans would reside on the West.

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Also in 1763 the King established a bounty-land system for paying soldiers. This Warrant is part of a Kentucky patent file.

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Revolutionary War Warrants issued to Virginia soldiers, heirs & assigns had to be used within the Kentucky or Ohio Military District. To research Military Districts for other states, access “Revolutionary War Bounty Land Grants” by Lloyd D. Bockstruck.

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Following the King’s example of governmental land appropriation, the state of Virginia adopted Land Laws to: (1) settle land disputes; (2) encourage land settlement; and (3) enhance the tax base.

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Land Law A may be read in its entirety in the Reference Library of the Land Office website.

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Land Law A defines the requirements for 400 acre Certificates of Settlement (corn claims); and three types of Preemption Warrants, including Preemption Warrants issued for blazing trees (chop claims) & drawing lots for an improvement. (Those persons had not established residency by planting a crop of corn or they would have qualified for an additional 400 acres under a Certificate of Settlement.)

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Land speculators (and others) purchased Treasury Warrants to patent land in Kentucky. See the Treasury Warrants Database on the Land Office Website for additional information.

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In 1772 Virginia created Fincastle County; in 1776, Fincastle County was divided into Kentucky, Montgomery & Washington counties. Researchers are reminded Kentucky has a Montgomery county and a Washington county within our borders. In 1780 Kentucky County was divided into three counties: Lincoln, Jefferson & Fayette. The three original counties converge in Frankfort at the junction of Benson Creek & Kentucky River. In 1795 Franklin County was formed out of Shelby County (daughter of Jefferson County), Woodford County (daughter of Fayette County), and Mercer County (daughter of Lincoln County).

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In May 2008 Secretary of State Trey Grayson announced the launching of additions to the Land Office website. Researchers may now access early Wills & color-scanned images of patent files for the Virginia Land Patent Series & the Old Kentucky Land Patent Series.

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The Compact with Virginia in 1789 established the foundation for Kentucky's statehood. Kentucky agreed to honor patents issued by Virginia's governors as one of the conditions for separation. Those warrants, surveys & grants comprise the Virginia Patent Series.

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Papers affecting Kentucky land title were transferred from Virginia to Frankfort in "sufficient trunks". The records were maintained by the Register of the Land Office in Frankfort.

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In 1934 the duties of the Kentucky Land Office were assigned to the Secretary of State. In the 1970's then-Secretary of State Ken Harper initiated a records preservation project for the historical documents.

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Researchers are encouraged to view the bounty-land-system as a four-step process. All documents in the patent file should be studied in sequential order to understand the various assignments that may have occurred before the Grant was issued.

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Early Fayette & Lincoln County Entry Books are housed in the Secretary of State's Land Office. The Entry Book for Jefferson County, which includes Kentucky County Entries, is housed at the Jefferson County Archives. Visit the Lincoln County Entries Database on the Secretary of State's Land Office website for more information regarding early Lincoln County Entries.

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Early Kentucky surveys were measured by metes & bounds (distance to points). In 1820 the Jackson Purchase was mapped by the range-township-section method for surveying public lands.

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The survey was made by the county surveyor or his deputy. Chaincarriers (also called chainmen) measured the length of the survey lines by using a four-pole chain (66') or a two-pole chain (33'). The same process of chain measurement can be seen at today's football games. Markers blazed trees used as survey corners. Often a housekeeper/pilot/agent/director was included as part of the survey team to oversee the surveying process.

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Patent files in the Virginia Series include Grants issued by Gov. Thomas Jefferson & Gov. Patrick Henry. The most recent patent was signed in 2000 by Gov. Paul Patton.

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Before initiating deed research, check the various patent series to determine if ancestral land was acquired by the patenting process. Jillson's "Kentucky Land Grants", publications by the Kentucky Historical Society, and the Secretary of State's Land Office website are resources for land patent names.

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Local researchers are adding land information to county history & genealogy websites.

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The Virginia Patent Series & the Old Kentucky Patent Series are now available on the Secretary of State's Land Office in the "Non-Military Registers & Land Records" channel. Open "Patent Series" to access the documents associated with these series, the West of Tennessee River Military Series, and the County Court Orders Database (with over 8200 scanned patent files).

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For the KHS/KGS Workshop, researchers studied one of four patents later plotted by speaker Betty Warren. This Warrant authorized one of the patents on 18 Mile Creek. The image is included as part of Old Kentucky Patent File 1060. To print the document, select low, medium, or high resolution on the preview pane, then print. Resetting paper size from letter to legal may be required for some documents.

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Researchers are encouraged to study the reverse side of all documents associated with a patent file. Although warrants & surveys may be assigned to other persons, researchers may find signatures on assignments helpful as they match signatures on marriage bonds and other documents.

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See the “Printing Tips” article on the Virginia & Old Kentucky Patent Series website for other printing suggestions.

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Document size may be enlarged (for research) or reduced (for printing) by changing the setting in the lower right corner of your computer screen.

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The grant for Old Kentucky Patent 1060 conveyed title to Allen, Pope, Patton & Saunders. The “Unfinished Patents” page of the Virginia & Old Kentucky Patent Series website includes Warrants & Surveys that have not been matched to a Grant (at this time). As research continues, Grants may be located.

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Use Tax Lists for 1795 through the mid-1830’s to determine the names of persons who originally patented the land owned by your ancestors. Construct a forward (past to present) or reverse (present to past) chain-of- title by studying land conveyances recorded in deeds, wills, & court judgments at the county clerk’s office and Libraries & Archives. Remember county formation dates!

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Researching Tax Lists

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Key Points to Remember

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Land Office Website

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We hope you enjoy the latest additions to the Kentucky Secretary of State’s Land Office Website.